



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 19 September 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
19 SEPTEMBER 1968

1. Czechoslovakia

The US mission at the UN learns that Prague will oppose any but the most generalized discussion of the Czech situation when the General Assembly convenes next week. Czechoslovakia's foreign ministry and UN mission have apparently not come under Soviet influence, but at the UN, the Czechs will try to avoid antagonizing the Soviets as a matter of prudence.

A member of Prague's UN mission predicts that they would not participate in debating an item specifically referring to the crisis, and might even walk out. They would take part, however, in debate on a general item which avoided referring directly to the situation but provided an opportunity to discuss it.

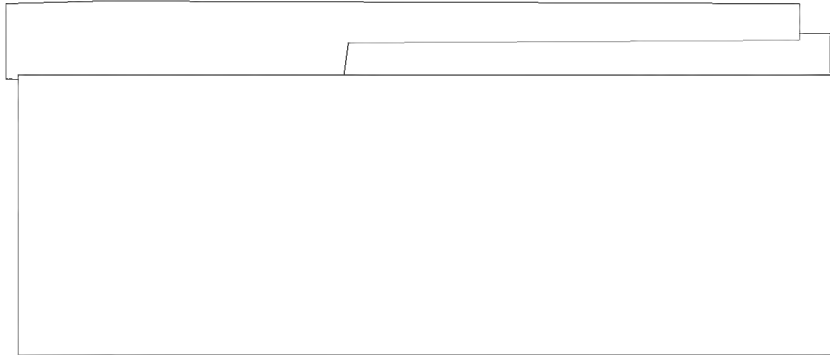
2. Panama

People around Arias are saying that as soon as he takes office next month he will move to cut back the size and authority of Vallarino's National Guard and will beef up the small secret police organization as a counter force. This kind of instant freewheeling would almost certainly start Arias off on a collision course with the Guard and sour relations with his powerful coalition partners to boot.

3. Portugal

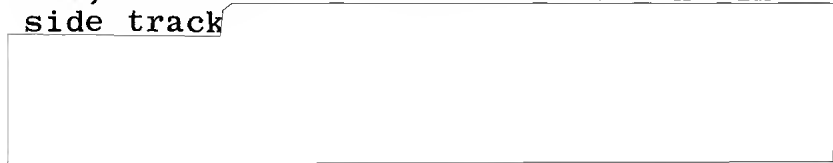
President Thomaz is under increasing pressure to name a new prime minister despite his wish to hold off in the remote chance of getting guidance from Salazar. Marcelo Caetano still seems to be the front runner for the job, although there are reports he is already saying "no" unless he can have a free hand in naming a cabinet.

4. North Korea

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5. Sweden-Vietnam

As the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam moves ahead with its plans to open an "information office" in Stockholm, the ruling Social Democrats in Sweden find themselves in competition with the local Communists in trying to win the Front's favor. As of now, the Social Democrats have the inside track



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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Hanoi on the Demilitarized Zone:

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[redacted] the Indian Foreign Ministry told US Embassy officials on 17 September that in recent conversations representatives of North Vietnam had shown a decided interest in ascertaining US minimum conditions for a bombing halt. The North Vietnamese reportedly complained that US remarks on restoring the zone were exceedingly vague and that Hanoi was being asked to pay a price without being told what the price was. The Indians were asked to "persuade" the US to define precisely what is wanted.

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The Indians admitted that at no time in the conversations did Hanoi officials indicate that they would be willing seriously to consider meeting US terms.

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[redacted] the Communists were probably more concerned with running down US motives than in spelling out their own position on the Demilitarized Zone. Hanoi frequently talks this way to Free World allies of the US as part of an effort to press for US concessions.

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French Correspondent Discusses his Work: The French press agency correspondent who returned from Hanoi in July after a six-month tour admitted to a member of the US Embassy that he had not been as successful in his Hanoi assignment as his two predecessors. He explained this by saying that his pro-Western bias had not endeared him to the Vietnamese and had prevented his developing close working relationships with North Vietnamese officials.



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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report today.

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